Amendments To The Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Previously presented) A method for communication, comprising:

receiving a request from a first party, submitted via a first communication service provider to a telephony application, to place a call using the application to a second party;

responsive to a characteristic of the call placed by the first party, selecting a second communication service provider to carry the call between the application and the second party; and

connecting the second party via the second communication service provider to communicate with the first party using the application,

wherein receiving the request comprises submitting the request to the application via an application programming interface (API), which exposes a platform-independent call model to the application, and wherein connecting the second party comprises connecting the call responsive to an instruction submitted by the application to the API, and

wherein the first and second communication service providers have respective first and second telephony signaling stacks, and wherein the call model comprises an abstract call model that is independent of the telephony signaling stacks used in placing calls to and receiving calls from the application.

Claims 2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the request comprises passing the request from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call model via a service provider interface of the call model, and wherein connecting the second party comprises passing signals to the second telephony signaling stack via the service provider interface, wherein the service provider interface is independent of the telephony signaling stacks.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4, wherein passing the request from the first telephony signaling stack comprises using a first plug-in program to associate the signals in the first telephony signaling stack with corresponding elements of the service provider interface, and wherein passing the signals to the second telephony signaling stack comprises using a second plug-in program to associate the signals in the second telephony signaling stack with the corresponding elements of the service provider interface.

6.   (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises selecting the second plug-in program from among a plurality of the plug-in programs that are provided for interacting with the abstract call model.

7.   (Original) A method according to claim 6, wherein selecting the second plug-in program comprises passing information regarding the call to a service manager program via a service management interface of the abstract call model, wherein the service manager program processes the information to determine the characteristic, and selects the second plug-in program responsive to the characteristic from a registry of the plug-in programs.

8.   (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein receiving the request comprises receiving an address of the second party to whom the call is to be placed, and wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises parsing the address to determine the second communication service provider that should be selected.

9.   (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein receiving the address comprises receiving a telephone number, and wherein parsing the address comprises identifying the second

communication provider based on a portion of the telephone number.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises determining a communication protocol to be used in communicating with the second party, and choosing the second communication service provider such that the second communication service provider supports the communication protocol.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 10, wherein receiving the request from the first party comprises communicating with the first party via the first communication service provider using a first communication protocol, and wherein the communication protocol used in communicating with the second party comprises a second communication protocol, different from the first protocol.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11, wherein one of the first and second communication protocols comprises a circuit-switched network protocol, while the other of the first and second communication protocols comprises a packet-switched network protocol.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein selecting the second communication service provider comprises

specifying a selection rule, and applying the selection rule to the characteristic in order to determine the second communication service provider to be selected.

Claims 14-25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously presented) Communication apparatus, comprising:

a communication interface, arranged to communicate with first and second communication service providers; and

a communication processor, arranged to send and receive communications via the communication interface, and further arranged to run a telephony application, such that upon receiving a request from a first party, submitted via the first communication service provider to the telephony application, to place a call using the application to a second party, the processor selects, responsive to a characteristic of the call placed by the first party, a second communication service provider to carry the call between the application and the second party, and connects the second party via the second communication service provider to communicate with the first party using the application,

wherein the processor is arranged so that the request is submitted to the application via an application programming interface (API), which exposes a platform-independent call model

to the application, and so that the call is connected to the

second party responsive to an instruction submitted by the

application to the API, and

wherein the first and second communication service

providers have respective first and second telephony signaling

stacks, and wherein the call model comprises an abstract call

model that is independent of the telephony signaling stacks used

in placing calls to and receiving calls from the application.

Claims 27-28.   (Canceled)

29.   (Previously presented) Apparatus according to

claim 26, wherein the processor is arranged so that the request

is passed from the first telephony signaling stack to the

abstract call model via a service provider interface of the call

model, and so that the call is connected to the second party by

passing signals to the second telephony signaling stack via the

service provider interface, wherein the service provider

interface is independent of the telephony signaling stacks.

30.   (Original) Apparatus according to claim 29,

wherein the processor is arranged so that the request is passed

from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call

model using a first plug-in program to associate the signals in

the first telephony signaling stack with corresponding elements

of the service provider interface, and wherein the signals are

passed to the second telephony signaling stack using a second plug-in program to associate the signals in the second telephony signaling stack with the corresponding elements of the service provider interface.

31. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 30, and comprising a memory, which is arranged to store a plurality of the plug-in programs that are provided for interacting with the abstract call model, and wherein the processor is arranged to select the second plug-in program from among the plurality of the plug-in programs in the memory.

32. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the processor is arranged to select the second plug-in program by passing information regarding the call to a service manager program via a service management interface of the abstract call model, wherein the service manager program processes the information to determine the characteristic, and selects the second plug-in program responsive to the characteristic from a registry of the plug-in programs.

33. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the request comprises an address of the second party to whom the call is to be placed, and wherein the processor is arranged to parse the address to determine the second communication service provider that should be selected.

34. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the address comprises a telephone number, and wherein the processor is arranged to identify the second communication provider based on a portion of the telephone number.

35. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the processor is arranged to determine a communication protocol to be used in communicating with the second party, and to choose the second communication service provider such that the second communication service provider supports the communication protocol.

36. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 35, wherein the processor is arranged to communicate with the first party via the first communication service provider using a first communication protocol, and wherein the communication protocol used in communicating with the second party comprises a second communication protocol, different from the first protocol.

37. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 36, wherein one of the first and second communication protocols comprises a circuit-switched network protocol, while the other of the first and second communication protocols comprises a packet-switched network protocol.

38. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the processor is arranged to select the second communication service provider by applying a selection rule to the characteristic in order to determine the second communication service provider to be selected.

Claims 39-55. (Canceled)

56. (Previously presented) A computer software product, comprising a computer-readable medium in which program instructions are stored, which instructions, when read by a computer that is arranged to communicate with first and second communication service providers, cause the computer to run a telephony application, such that upon receiving a request from a first party, submitted via the first communication service provider to the telephony application, to place a call using the application to a second party, the computer selects, responsive to a characteristic of the call placed by the first party, a second communication service provider to carry the call between the application and the second party, and connects the second party via the second communication service provider to communicate with the first party using the application,

wherein the instructions cause the computer to submit the request to the application via an application programming interface (API), which exposes a platform-independent call model

to the application, and so that the call is connected to the

second party responsive to a response submitted by the

application to the API, and

wherein the first and second communication service

providers have respective first and second telephony signaling

stacks, and wherein the call model comprises an abstract call

model that is independent of the telephony signaling stacks used

in placing calls to and receiving calls from the application.

Claims 57-58.   (Canceled)

59.   (Previously presented) A product according to

claim 56, wherein the instructions cause the computer to pass

the request from the first telephony signaling stack to the

abstract call model via a service provider interface of the call

model, and so that the call is connected to the second party by

passing signals to the second telephony signaling stack via the

service provider interface, wherein the service provider

interface is independent of the telephony signaling stacks.

60.   (Original) A product according to claim 59,

wherein the instructions cause the computer to pass the request

from the first telephony signaling stack to the abstract call

model, using a first plug-in program to associate the signals in

the first telephony signaling stack with corresponding elements

of the service provider interface, and to pass the signals to

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the second telephony signaling stack using a second plug-in

program to associate the signals in the second telephony

signaling stack with the corresponding elements of the service

provider interface.

61.   (Original) A product according to claim 60,

wherein the instructions cause the computer to select the second

plug-in program from among a plurality of the plug-in programs

that are provided for interacting with the abstract call model.

62.   (Original) A product according to claim 61,

wherein the instructions cause the computer to select the second

plug-in program by passing information regarding the call to a

service manager program via a service management interface of

the abstract call model, wherein the service manager program

processes the information to determine the characteristic, and

selects the second plug-in program responsive to the

characteristic from a registry of the plug-in programs.

63.   (Original) A product according to claim 56,

wherein the request comprises an address of the second party to

whom the call is to be placed, and wherein the instructions

cause the computer to parse the address to determine the second

communication service provider that should be selected.

64.   (Original) A product according to claim 63, wherein the address comprises a telephone number, and wherein the instructions cause the computer to identify the second communication provider based on a portion of the telephone number.

65.   (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the instructions cause the computer to determine a communication protocol to be used in communicating with the second party, and to choose the second communication service provider such that the second communication service provider supports the communication protocol.

66.   (Original) A product according to claim 65, wherein the instructions cause the computer to communicate with the first party via the first communication service provider using a first communication protocol, and wherein the communication protocol used in communicating with the second party comprises a second communication protocol, different from the first protocol.

67.   (Original) A product according to claim 66, wherein one of the first and second communication protocols comprises a circuit-switched network protocol, while the other of the first and second communication protocols comprises a packet-switched network protocol.

68.   (Original) A product according to claim 56, wherein the instructions cause the computer to select the second communication service provider by applying a selection rule to the characteristic in order to determine the second communication service provider to be selected.

Claims 69-80.   (Canceled)